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REVIEWS

RECENT TEXTS FOR JUNIOR HIGH-SCHOOL GERMAN

- (A) **Leitfaden der deutschen Sprache** by W. H. Gohdes and E. R. Dodge. H. Holt & Co. 1917. ix + 290 pp. \$1.00.
- (B) **Ein Anfangsbuch** by Laura B. Crandon. Illustrated by Alida Clément. World Book Co. 1917. xiv + 306 pp. \$.96.
- (C) **Schritt für Schritt, ein Buch für Anfänger** by Hannna M. Oehlmann. Ginn & Co. 1917. vi + 151 pp. \$.60.

With the spread of the Junior High School idea the demand for the production of a new type of text for the various branches of study has become imperative. The uncertainty as to just what a JHS is, and just how the work in it is to be conducted, has perhaps retarded the production of texts more than would otherwise have been the case. The conception of JHS work as merely a simplification of the former four-year high-school course has given rise to a series of texts for German that began with Mrs. Gronow's *Jung Deutschland* (Ginn) in 1912, and is also apparently responsible for (A) and (B). The fundamentally different, more liberal conception, and to the writer's way of thinking, the correct one, has looked upon the JHS as a means for a more or less complete renovation and reorganization of secondary instruction, and is only just commencing to produce in its wake a line of beginning texts, of which the revised Foster's *Geschichten und Märchen* (Heath) was perhaps the pioneer, and to which (C) belongs. In choosing a first book for JHS use, teachers must be fully conscious of what type will fit into their plan of instruction. The bare statement of author or publisher that his text is for JHS use is somewhat non-committal and needs further elucidation.

It is not the intention here to go into any detailed discussion of these three texts, but rather merely to indicate their type, comment on their general execution, and point out where they may profitably be used. (A) states in the preface that it "is designed to meet the needs of young beginners, especially those in JHS. It consists of a few pages of preliminary exercises, a main portion comprising forty-five lessons, a brief systematic Grammar (in English), a special and general vocabulary." The work is very commendably done, as was to be expected of the senior author especially, from his connection with the excellent *Sprach- und Lesebuch* (Holt 1912), which has contributed liberally to the present grammar synopsis. Unfortunately the absolutely unorthodox noun classification of the earlier book is retained here, leading to almost inevitable confusion in the upper years when other reference books are used. Also the same confusing categorical arrangement of the words in the special vocabularies occurs here as before. The exercises are somewhat lacking in variety, but are on the whole excellent. An abundance of good reading material is provided. The illustrations are numerous

and quite pleasing, although exception might be taken to the left-handed mower on p. 33 and the "goose step" on p. 42. Special attention ought to be called to the *Vorübungen*, which indicate in such an excellent way, far too briefly for actual needs, of course, how the first half year or so of JHS work might be done. As in practically every recent book, a few songs with music are inserted.

(B) "has been written primarily for JHS. . . . There has long been felt the need of a systematic presentation of grammar in connection with simple reading matter. This book has attempted to meet this need and at the same time to keep the child mind unconscious of the grammar. . . . The book can (also) be used for beginners in the ordinary four-year high-school courses." After a brief set of *Notes to Teachers* there follows the *Erster Teil* with 36 *Aufgaben*, then the *Zweiter Teil* with 29 additional *Aufgaben*, dealing with the more difficult grammar topics. An appendix of forms, special and general vocabularies, and an index complete the book. The reading selections are numerous and seem well chosen and adapted. The exercises are plentiful, simple and quite varied. Pronunciation is given special attention in Part I, and many drill exercises are provided. A striking feature are the sections entitled *Zum Spielen*, with definite instructions for many simple classroom games which cannot help but be of enormous aid to the novice at this sort of teaching. With very few exceptions the grammar is treated solely by means of model phrases or forms, plus abundant drill. Rarely a principle or rule is directly stated. The illustrations are plentiful and appropriate.

There can be no doubt that both (A) and (B) aim primarily at teaching grammar systematically. The reading material is used consciously for that purpose and one scarcely sees how the pupils could be kept unconscious of it. This is more plainly the case with (A) than with (B). The latter represents a somewhat intermediate stage between (A) and (C). The preface of (C) states that "this little reader, planned for use in connection with a simple grammar. . . . is intended for the use of grammar grades and intermediate schools, with children from eleven to fourteen or fifteen years of age." There are 80 pp. of reading text, plentifully besprinkled with illustrations of the same type as those in (A) and (B). In the beginning many of the little tales are dramatized, thus indicating a treatment for the later ones, which are given in narrative form. The selection is very good. Vocabulary help is given by means of English translations at the end of each selection, and a general German-English vocabulary is added. There are a few songs with music. The feature that makes it possible to include (C) with (A) and (B) is the 30-page section of *Fragen und Übungen*, which aim primarily at impressing the subject-matter of the stories on the minds of the pupils, but which contain an excellent and extremely simple introduction to the first principles of grammar. A trial with a JHS class has proved conclusively the practical usability of this book as a first text.

The writer is not a prophet, but he hopes to see the day come when we shall have JHS teachers of modern languages trained to the point where they can introduce their classes to the subject-matter without the use of a text-book

during the first two or three months, employing the simple means of acquiring a good pronunciation and a basic vocabulary that are indicated, for instance, all too briefly in the first few pages of (A) or (B). Then, leaving the systematic study of grammar for the second year, the rest of the first year could be devoted to work with such texts as (C). In the second year, while proceeding with the reading, a text of the nature of (A) or (B), divested of its *Vorübungen*, and consciously written for this stage of the work, would naturally suggest itself for the introduction to theoretical grammar. There are at present a number of such books available in addition to (A) and (B), but owing to the fact that they were written with other things in mind, they contain much superfluous material that must be eliminated in actual use.

Until such a stage of development as we have mentioned above has come about, there will still be need of the mixed type of text represented by (A) and (B), affording a crutch for the teacher as well as material for the pupil. Owing to the excellence of this teacher-assistance, it seems to the writer that (B) offers perhaps the best choice at present on the market for the teacher who has had small experience with this grade of work, and who wishes to have a book from the very beginning. On the other hand, for second-year JHS grammar study, (B) is superior to (A), with the understanding that the *Vorübungen* are to be omitted. For the experienced and resourceful JHS teacher who wishes no systematic grammar the first year, (C) offers even somewhat better assistance than Miss Foster's book mentioned above, which has for several years stood alone as the representative of this particular type of text.

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"Zaragüeta" con notas y vocabulario por M. A. de Vitis; George Wahr, Ann Arbor, 1917.

Cuando acababa yo de leer las notas de la presente edición de "Zaragüeta," con el regocijo que sólo puede imaginarse el que tenga la curiosidad de hojear la obrita, llegó a mis manos el número de "The Modern Language Journal," February, 1918, en el cual mi compatriota M. Romera-Navarro coge por su cuenta "A Spanish Reader for Beginners" del mismo autor y nos señala unos doscientos cincuenta errores encontrados en el texto. Al terminar la lectura de la reseña, que podemos calificar de excesivamente bondadosa porque no señala todo lo malo que hay en el libro, varias preguntas se me vinieron en rápida sucesión a la mente: ¿Cuándo van a terminarse de publicar libros de esta clase? ¿Qué ventajas nos traen la mayoría de los libros de texto para la enseñanza del español, que están saliendo con tan excesiva frecuencia? George W. H. Shield en su artículo "Spanish Readers" publicado en el primer número de "Hispania," se queja con razón de la prisa que estos caballeros se dan a sacar nuevos libros sin darnos tiempo ni aun de leerlos detenidamente: pero la circunstancia del número merece escasa consideración al lado de la primordial de su valor pedagógico. Un ilustre colega del Este insiste en que no debe aceptarse un libro para la enseñanza de lenguas con más de dos errores por cada mil palabras. ¿Qué diría Vd. de un libro con sesenta errores